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Addresses: R. J. Dowsett, Livingstone Museum, P.O. Box 498, Livingstone, Zambia;
 Present address: Nyika National Park, Private Bag Chilinda, P.O. Rumphi, Malawi;
 R. Stjernstedt, P.O. Box RW 60, Lusaka, Zambia.

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Recent additions to the Zambian List

by R. J. Dowsett

Received 13 February 1979

Benson *et al.* (1971) accepted the undoubted occurrence of 698 species in Zambia (excluding the now extinct Ostrich *Struthio camelus*). Subsequently, to the end of 1978, 18 species have been proven to occur in Zambia for the first time (and full details are awaited of at least 2 more species). In addition, confirmatory evidence has been obtained for 4 species whose occurrence was doubted, or at least not accepted unequivocally, by Benson *et al.* Most of these additional records have been documented, severally, in the *Bulletin of the Zambian Ornithological Society* (1969-78, Vols. 1-10). As this cyclostyled publication is not widely available outside Zambia, the following synthesis seems desirable. Unless stated otherwise, all specimens and copies of all photographs mentioned are held in the Livingstone Museum.

EGRETTA VINACEIGULA *Slaty Egret*. First noticed at Blue Lagoon in the early 1960s (R. A. Critchley), and subsequently at Lochinvar, where I caught and ringed 2 on 9.x.1969. At the time, *vinaceigula* was considered to be a colour phase of the Black Egret *E. ardesiaca*, and no mention was made of it by Benson *et al.* Subsequent to the reviews of its apparent specific status by Benson, Brooke & Irwin (1971) and Vernon (1971), it has been recognised at several localities in Zambia, from the Zambezi River north to the Bangweulu Swamps and Nchelenge District. Its distribution is considered in more detail by Dowsett (in press a), who shows that there are records for all months. There are specimens from Namwala District (J. F. R. Colebrook-Robjent) and Mongu District (T. O. Osborne), and several observers possess photographs from Lochinvar and Choma District.

GYPIS COPROTHERES *Cape Vulture*. Two adults were seen and photographed at Lochinvar on 8.x.1974 (T. O. Osborne, Sir Peter Scott, *et al.*). Lady Scott's photographs have been examined by P. J. Mundy, who (*in litt.*) confirms the identification. One was seen at Lochinvar on 26.v.1977 (G. P. Robinson *et al.*), and I have confirmed the identity from photographs in Mr. Robinson's possession. Other Cape Vulture records have been claimed, but none has been documented satisfactorily. The Lochinvar birds were presumably non-breeding visitors.

HIERAETUS PENNATUS *Booted Eagle*. Benson *et al.* (p. 68) mention 4 sight records. Subsequently, this Palaearctic migrant has been seen on numerous occasions by competent observers. At the end of Feb. 1978 there were 69 fully acceptable records, falling between 2.x. and 28.iv., with additional sightings in August (1) and September (2). These latter, although in need of confirmation, are of interest in view of recent breeding records in South Africa, reviewed by Martin *et al.* (1978). A claimed breeding record for Zambia, of c/2 in a tree nest, on 6.iii.1936 (Cottrell 1938) is not acceptable, unless the eggs can be re-examined and proved to belong to this species. Most Zambian sightings are from the south and east, but this may be an artefact. There are still neither specimens nor photographs, but some individuals have been watched very closely, and there can be no reason for excluding the Booted Eagle from the Zambian List.

AQUILA NIPALENSIS *Steppe Eagle*. Several sight records of this Palaearctic migrant were mentioned by Benson *et al.* (p. 69), and many have been seen by competent observers subsequently. Extreme dates of acceptable sightings are 29.ix. and 9.iv., most falling between mid-Oct and mid-Mar. I collected 2 specimens at Lochinvar in Nov 1970 (Brooke *et al.* 1972), and have photographed others there.

VANELLUS SUPERCILIOSUS *Brown-chested Wattled Plover*. Up to 3 were well seen at Mwinilunga on 1-2.x.78 (P. St. J. Bowen). This intra-African migrant was to be expected in the extreme northwest of Zambia, in view of a specimen taken 13.x. at Kasaji in the Shaba Province of Zaire (Schouteden 1971).

PLUVIALIS DOMINICUS *Eastern Golden Plover*. One was seen and photographed at Kafubu Dam, near Ndola, 30.x.-5.xi.1972 (S. G. Madge, G. P. Robinson, *et al.*), and one was seen at the same place 4.xi.1973 (C. Carter, D. K. Richards). Two at Lusaka, 22-23.x.1975 were both collected (D. R. Aspinwall). At Lochinvar, Aspinwall reported 2 on 12.ii.1977 and one on 16.x.1977. Presumably these birds were on passage to and from non-breeding quarters on the southwestern coast of Africa (Dowsett in press b). Unfortunately it is not possible to allocate the Lusaka specimens to subspecies with any degree of certainty.

CHARADRIUS LESCHENAULTII *Great Sandplover*. One was seen and photographed near Kafue town between 9 and 22.xi.1972 (D. R. Aspinwall, R. J. Dowsett, *et al.*). One at Lusaka 20-23.x.1975 was collected (Aspinwall). Singles have also been seen at Blue Lagoon, 25.ix.-3.x.1976 (Aspinwall, Dowsett, *et al.*), Kafubu Dam, 8-10.xi.1976 (P. B. Taylor) and Mwinilunga, 27.xi.1978 (P. St. J. Bowen). This Palaearctic migrant may be annual on passage to non-breeding quarters in coastal southwestern Africa (Dowsett in press b).

LIMOSA LIMOSA *Black-tailed Godwit*. In the northern winter of 1972/73 there were 4 sightings of this species in Zambia. At Lochinvar a party of 10 was reported 24.ix.1972 (D. K. Richards, G. P. Robinson, *et al.*) and a single was there 1.i.1973 (R. J. Douthwaite, J. J. Tucker). At Lusaka one was present 20.i.-4.ii.1973 (H. Hallen, *et al.*), and excellent photographs were obtained by I. C. Tanner. One at Luanshya 11-18.iii.1973 (M. I. Meadows, D. K. Richards, *et al.*) was reportedly also photographed. A few records have been claimed subsequently, but only one is completely acceptable, a single bird seen by D. K. Richards at Luanshya, 23.xii.1973.

Unlike the Bar-tailed Godwit *L. lapponica* - which winters on the African coasts, and ought to occur annually on passage across Zambia - all Black-tailed Godwits in Africa are normally inland, north of the equator. It is tempting to correlate these southern occurrences with similarly abnormal numbers of Garganey *Anas querquedula* in Zambia in 1972/73, except that even larger numbers of this duck were reported in 1973/74 (see footnote to Irwin 1974). Clark *et al.* (1974) mention records of Black-tailed Godwit even further south in 1972/73, from Botswana, Rhodesia and 2 localities in the Transvaal of South Africa, clearly part of the movement observed in Zambia. (Incidentally, they erroneously credit both Lochinvar records to A. J. Tree, instead of to the observers mentioned above.) There were further records in the Transvaal through to June 1975 (Skead & Dean 1977). Birds at both Transvaal localities in 1972/73 stayed throughout the breeding season, and so 1973/74 records may be of birds left over from the previous year.

GALLINAGO GALLINAGO *Common Snipe*. There have been no observations subsequent to those resuscitated by Button (1973), but it is likely this species is overlooked in northern Zambia.

CALIDRIS TEMMINCKII *Temminck's Stint*. Early in 1977 this species was seen at 3 localities in Zambia. Three birds were near Mazabuka on 5.i.1977 (S. Brogger-Jensen), one near Ndola 6 and 15.ii. (P. B. Taylor) and one at Kitwe 15.ii. (E. H. Penry). The Ndola bird was photographed. As with the Black-tailed Godwit, this species normally spends the non-breeding season inland in Africa, north of the equator.

LIMICOLA FALCINELLUS *Broad-billed Sandpiper*. One was well seen and photographed at Mufulira, 1-2.xi.1975 (G. P. Robinson, *et al.*). It might be expected that very small numbers cross Zambia annually, on passage to the southwestern coast (Dowsett in press b).

SCHOUTEDENAPUS MYOPTILUS *Scarce Swift*. Benson *et al.* (p. 147) refer to 2 sight records from the Nyika Plateau. It has subsequently been found commonly there and is probably resident, there being records for most months of the year. It has also been reported from the Mafinga Mountains. Fuller details of these records are given by Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire (1978).

CAMPETHERA CAROLI *Brown-eared Woodpecker*. Along the Jimbe Stream (10° 57' S, 24° 05' E) in northern Mwinilunga District, I collected a pair on 28.vii.1973. Subsequently, this evergreen forest species has proved to be resident there, and has been seen at other localities, south to the Isombu (Lisombo) Stream (C. Carter, P. B. Taylor). Benson *et al.* (p. 181), in suggesting that *caroli* might occur in Mwinilunga, gave it the name Buff-spotted, in confusion with *C. nivosa*.

EREMOPTERIX LEUCOPAREIA *Fischer's Finch Lark*. First reported from Zambia, at Lundazi, 22-23.xii.1976 by D. R. Aspinwall. During Sep 1977 there appeared to be 20-30 pairs in the area, and they are possibly resident (D. Rafferty). I collected a ♂ there on 20.xii.1977, in non-breeding condition. Presumably this species is a recent arrival at Lundazi, where there has been much opening-up of the woodland for agriculture. Certainly one might have expected E. L. Button to find it when he resided there in the 1940s and 50s. On the other hand, the possibility of a seasonal movement from elsewhere cannot yet be ruled out, the evidence for such movements in Malawi being suggested by Benson & Benson (1977).

HIRUNDO SPILODERA *South African Cliff Swallow*. Diagnostic views were obtained of one on Chitunta Plain, Mwinilunga District, 13.xi.1978 (R. J. Dowsett). This is an intra-African migrant, most of which possibly travel between South Africa and the lower Congo basin to the west of Zambia. First birds arrive back on breeding grounds in the Transvaal in early August (Skead & Dean 1977), but the apparent lateness of the Chitunta bird is matched by some Zambian records of Greater Striped Swallow *H. cucullata*, a species which seems to have a similar migration.

PHYLASTREPHUS PLACIDUS *Olive Mountain Bulbul*. This montane species was first found in the Mafinga Mountains in Aug 1971, when I collected specimens there at over 2000 m (Dowsett & Stjernstedt 1973). Since then, it has been found in this area down to about 1800 m in riparian forest (D. R. Aspinwall). I have given elsewhere (Dowsett 1972) reasons for considering *placidus* a species distinct from *P. cabanisi*, and R. Stjernstedt (pers. comm.) has further evidence of vocal differences.

The English name used above is that recommended by Dowsett & Stjernstedt (1973), and it appears much preferable to "Placid Bulbul" as used by Benson & Benson (1977) and others. It is a noisy species, and so "placid" seems meaningless. C. W. Benson (*in litt.*) tells me that Shelley's original description of *Xenocichla placida* offers no explanation for the use of this name.

SHEPPARDIA SHARPEI *Sharpe's Akalat*. Benson *et al.* (1970: 51) suggested that this small montane forest robin was absent from the Zambian (western) side of the Nyika Plateau. However, it was found there in May and June 1974 by T. O. Osborne, and we now know that it is present in several forest patches, being especially numerous in Manyenjere forest. In Dec 1977, F. Lemaire and I found at least 4 ♂♂ in Manyenjere singing within sound of each other. They favour areas of thick under-scrub inside the forest, and are thus patchily distributed. Osborne collected a specimen, and in Dec 1975 I caught and ringed 3 birds, 2 of them juvenals from eggs laid the previous month. Prior to discovery on the Nyika, this akalat was found in the Mafinga Mountains on 30.viii.1972 by D. R. Aspinwall (see postscript to Dowsett & Stjernstedt 1973).

HIPPOLAIS OLIVETORUM *Olive-tree Warbler*. This Palearctic migrant has occurred in Zambia on at least 3 occasions. I collected a specimen at Lochinvar 27.xi.1973, one was ringed and photographed at Lusaka 17.xii.1974 (J. J. Tucker, *et al.*) and I watched a singing bird at very close quarters near Mambova on 26.i.1975. In addition, 3 sight records by D. R. Aspinwall from Feira District are probably correct (one on 25.xi.1973, 2 singles 8.ii.1975), but descriptions do not seem to rule out entirely the less likely possibility of Upcher's Warbler *H. languida*. It is not surprising that small numbers should occur on passage, with some apparently wintering in *Acacia* country in southern Zambia.

PHYLLOSCOPUS RUFICAPILLA *Yellow-throated Warbler*. Specimens were collected in the Mafinga Mountains in Aug 1971 (Dowsett & Stjernstedt 1973). This is still the only area from which this montane species is known in Zambia. It is conspicuous in forests on the Malawi side of the Nyika Plateau, on the eastern escarpment, but is apparently, for no obvious reason, absent from the Zambian side.

PLATYSTEIRA CASTANEA *Chestnut Wattle-eye*. This monarchine flycatcher was found in riparian forest at 2 neighbouring localities in the extreme north of Mwinilunga District on 14.viii.1976 (D. R. Aspinwall). Birds of both sexes were seen on 3 occasions and their call tape-recorded. This is one of many species of the Congo forests which is at its southern

limit in the north of Mwinilunga; several other species known from Kasaji, 90 km to the northwest in Zaire (Schouteden 1971), may in time be found in Zambia.

Acknowledgements: I am very grateful to the observers mentioned above for details of their records, and to those referees who have examined and criticised specimens and field descriptions. Mr. C. W. Benson has kindly commented on a draft of this paper.

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- Address:* R. J. Dowsett, Livingstone Museum, P.O. Box 498, Livingstone, Zambia.
Present address: Nyika National Park, Private Bag Chilinda, P.O. Rumphu, Malawi.

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Moult of the Long-billed Ringed Plover *Charadrius placidus*

by R. C. Taylor

Received 27 February 1979

The Long-billed Ringed Plover *Charadrius placidus* is a little studied eastern Palearctic wader which breeds from the Middle Amur valley south through Manchuria and China to Japan, and possibly in Tibet (Vaurie 1965, 1972). Mainly it breeds inland on the shores of lakes and rivers, but has been reported breeding to a height of c 1000 m in Japan (Austin & Kuroda 1953).